



## **‘Marriage’, ‘Massage’, Metaphor and Gender in US–Iranian Relations During the 1960s**

OFFILER, Ben <<http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6458-535X>>

Available from Sheffield Hallam University Research Archive (SHURA) at:

<http://shura.shu.ac.uk/23550/>

---

This document is the author deposited version. You are advised to consult the publisher's version if you wish to cite from it.

### **Published version**

OFFILER, Ben (2018). ‘Marriage’, ‘Massage’, Metaphor and Gender in US–Iranian Relations During the 1960s. *The International History Review*, 1-16.

---

### **Copyright and re-use policy**

See <http://shura.shu.ac.uk/information.html>

**'Marriage', 'Massage', Metaphor and  
Gender in US-Iranian Relations during  
the 1960s**

## **'Marriage', 'Massage', Metaphor and Gender in US-Iranian Relations during the 1960s**

Abstract: Although they were allies, during the 1960s relations between the United States and Iran were fraught with tensions. For American policymakers, Iran was an important Cold War client and oil-supplier in a turbulent region. It was vital, therefore, to maintain a good relationship with the Shah of Iran. Indeed, United States policy was based in large part on American assessments of the Shah as an individual. This article seeks to assess how the language and metaphor used by American policymakers to describe and understand the Shah reflected and informed United States policy. Officials within the Kennedy and Johnson administrations viewed the Shah through a highly gendered lens that magnified perceptions of him as a weak, highly sensitive and irrational leader - characteristics deemed to be overly feminine. This article therefore contends that US policy towards Iran was influenced by gender stereotypes as policymakers lamented their reliance on the Shah, who they deemed to be insufficiently 'masculine'.

Keywords: United States, Iran, foreign policy, gender, Cold War

Word count: 10,823

In April 1962, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the Shah of Iran, visited the United States for only the second time since a CIA-sponsored coup had restored him to power nine years earlier. The visit was also an opportunity for the Shah to meet President John F. Kennedy for the first time. US policymakers anticipated some tension at the meeting; Iran was still in a precarious political and economic condition and the Shah resented the new president's election campaign rhetoric, which had been less than kind to conservative monarchies like his own. For his part, Kennedy was unsure of the Shah's ability to resolve Iran's continued instability.

As it turned out, most of the visit was spent discussing Iran's military requirements. The Shah was determined to improve his country's military capacity in order to defend itself

from regional threats. Indeed, for much of the decade military sales would be a key component of the evolving US-Iranian relationship. So concerned was the Shah by the Kennedy administration's reluctance to increase arms sales to Iran but willingness to provide Turkey with greater levels of military assistance that in his first meeting with Kennedy he told the President, 'America treats Turkey as a wife, and Iran as a concubine.'<sup>1</sup> The Shah's choice of language and use of metaphor neatly encapsulated how he perceived the nature of the US-Iranian relationship. Washington was the senior, dominant partner, while Tehran was given no respect as the junior partner.

Moreover, the Shah bitterly framed the relationship in highly gendered terms: the United States was the man and Iran the woman, although, crucially, not the wife. Throughout the 1960s, American policymakers would also resort to gendered language and metaphors to describe, define, and understand US-Iranian relations. By examining their language and use of metaphors, this article demonstrates how American policymakers made gendered assessments of the Shah's personality, which were in turn used to inform US policy towards Iran.

Language and metaphors inform our understanding of the world by shaping how we perceive or imagine different things. As George Lakoff and Mark Johnson have argued, 'metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action ... Our concepts structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people. Our conceptual system thus plays a central role in defining our everyday realities.'<sup>2</sup> To understand the decisions and actions of historical figures then, one has to consider the metaphors by which they defined, constructed and understood their 'realities.' Or, as the historian Frank Costigliola has observed, 'although language does not determine, language shapes meaning as it conveys meaning.'<sup>3</sup> The language used by policymakers can shed light on how they understood certain events and help to explain the decision-making

process. The common – and, at times, unconscious – use of metaphor in everyday language is ‘almost necessary to convey meaning.’<sup>4</sup> Metaphors are a tool for constructing and conveying meaning. Words and metaphors mean different things to different people depending on the cultural, social, political and historical context.

In the history of US-Iranian relations, vivid metaphors abound: Jimmy Carter’s ill-fated ‘island of stability’ speech on the eve of the Iranian Revolution; the moniker of ‘the Great Satan’ given by supporters of the Islamic Republic to the United States; George W. Bush’s inclusion of Iran in his so-called ‘Axis of Evil.’<sup>5</sup> Each of these are examples of how language and metaphors can shape public perception and thereby justify government action. However, to avoid drowning in a sea of metaphors, this article will discuss two specific examples – that of ‘massage’ and ‘marriage’ – in order to assess the role that concepts of gender, masculinity, and Orientalism played in US-Iranian relations during the 1960s. During this period, US policymakers constructed highly gendered assessments of the Shah of Iran that aligned with both traditional American ideals concerning femininity and masculinity and Orientalist tropes.

Since Emily Rosenberg’s pioneering article in *The Journal of American History*, and Andrew Rotter’s similarly ground-breaking work in the same journal four years later, historians have increasingly adopted gender as an interpretative framework for examining American foreign relations.<sup>6</sup> As Katherine A.S. Sibley noted in her introduction to a 2012 special issue on ‘Gender and Sexuality in American Foreign Relations’ in *Diplomatic History* (eighteen years after a similarly titled issue was published in the same journal), ‘it is less controversial in this millennium.’<sup>7</sup> For Rosenberg, writing in 1990, it was hoped that sustained investigation of gender’s historical role in US foreign relations ‘may provide deeper understanding of the cultural assumptions from which foreign policies spring.’<sup>8</sup> Such

research, Rosenberg argued, could reveal and illuminate ‘the systems of thought that underlie constructions of power and knowledge.’<sup>9</sup>

In his seminal article on masculinity during the Kennedy administration, Robert Dean added his voice to the contention ‘that a more complete history of politics and policy demands consideration of gender as a factor in policy reasoning.’<sup>10</sup> While recent literature suggests that many diplomatic historians have been persuaded of the value of incorporating considerations of gender into their research, anybody who has delivered seminars on the subject to undergraduate students is all too familiar with the hypothetical question posed by Kristin Hoganson, ‘What’s Gender Got to Do with It?’<sup>11</sup> This question often reflects a mistaken assumption that a study of gender is simply a study of women, which Rosenberg has shown to be just one of many ways in which historians can incorporate gender into American foreign relations.<sup>12</sup>

As Andrew Rotter has argued, for diplomatic historians interested in how gender affects the worldview of US policymakers, it ‘is not a static idea, but a transnational process: it is the assignment of certain characteristics based on prevailing ideas of masculinity and femininity to a people and nation by another people and nation.’<sup>13</sup> Using a variety of sources perhaps considered non-traditional by diplomatic historians, for example, Rotter highlights the ways in which American ideas about and ideals of masculinity and femininity influenced US policy towards India and Pakistan during the Cold War. Where predominantly Hindu Indian men were met with ridicule or mistrust for embracing characteristics that in the United States would be more commonly associated with women, successive US administrations found the warrior-like traits and toughness of Muslim Pakistani men to be more appealing. American perceptions of gender then, particularly regarding the characteristics that make the ideal, sufficiently masculine man, helped to shape how policymakers viewed the role of India and Pakistan in the Cold War.<sup>14</sup>

More broadly, K.A. Cuordileone has observed ‘an excessive preoccupation with – and anxiety about – masculinity’ in American Cold War political discourse.<sup>15</sup> Reaching similar conclusions, Dean identifies an ‘ideology of masculinity’ that influenced how successive administrations approached the Cold War, prescribing acceptably ‘masculine’ actions and prohibiting those deemed insufficiently ‘masculine,’ i.e too feminine. Using the elite male officials that made up the bulk of the key decision-makers within the Kennedy administration as a case study, Dean suggests JFK’s foreign policies ‘represented an effort to link administration policy to unquestionable and “natural” American male virtues: physical strength, force of will, adventurous bravery, technical competence, and frontier independence.’<sup>16</sup>

In terms of US-Iranian relations, Mary Ann Heiss has shown how American conceptions of gender were instrumental in shaping the Eisenhower administration’s discomfort with and ultimate rejection of Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadeq. Known for his theatrical displays of emotion, often weeping when delivering speeches in parliament, and susceptible to ill-health, sometimes bemusing foreign visitors by receiving them dressed in his pyjamas while still in bed, Mossadeq more closely fitted negative feminine stereotypes than the ideal masculine characteristics of strength, toughness and virility that US policymakers sought in their Cold War allies. As a result, Heiss argues, these considerations contributed to the decision by the Eisenhower administration to reject Mossadeq and authorise the joint CIA-MI6 coup that toppled his government in 1953 and restored the Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, to the throne.<sup>17</sup>

During the 1960s, US officials dealing with Iran continued to view the world both through a Cold War lens *and* a highly gendered one. Feminine characteristics were used to describe the Shah’s weaknesses, while his strengths were framed in masculine terms. Throughout the decade, however, policymakers also spoke of US-Iranian relations as if it was

a marriage or relationship between lovers. The United States, as the senior, more powerful partner (read: more masculine), was the 'man' in the relationship, while the Shah/Iran was the 'woman.' As such, the language and metaphors used by American policymakers when describing the Shah was often reminiscent of how they might describe a flighty, irrational, impetuous, weak-willed woman.

The framing of international relations in language evoking personal, and even sexual, relationships is common among both scholars and policymakers. Historians have long spoken of Iran's close alliance with the United States but also its flirtation with the Soviet Union.<sup>18</sup> Concerned by the possibility of communist subversion, not least because of Iran's long border with the Soviet Union and position as a gateway to the greater Middle East, American policymakers frequently spoke of Soviet efforts to cultivate closer ties with Iran as if Moscow were a man trying to seduce America's girlfriend. The Shah also suggested that 'the Soviets are trying to woo Iran with, among other things, offers of military, including naval, equipment.'<sup>19</sup> On another occasion, he would reassure his American counterparts that 'during his current visit to Iran Brezhnev has been highly agreeable and has made no attempt to woo Shah or to separate him from his allies.'<sup>20</sup> While the Shah was often willing to exaggerate Soviet attempts to prise him away from America's arms, the metaphor commonly depicted Iran as a partner of the United States that could, if not treated properly, leave Washington for the Soviets if the trinkets they offered were tempting enough.

In American depictions of the US-Iranian relationship, moreover, the United States embodied the masculine/male partner, while the Shah and Iran were identified, often through coded terms, as the feminine/female partner. As Frank Costigliola has shown in his examination of George Kennan, this kind of gendered language pitting masculine against feminine was used by American diplomats throughout the Cold War. Costigliola's close reading of Kennan's writings shows how the diplomat, at least in part, understood the Cold



War as a competition between the Soviet Union and the United States for the affections of the Russian people. Indeed, Kennan's highly gendered language in his famous Long Telegram, which depicted the Soviet Union as rapacious and sexually aggressive, was echoed by policymakers concerned by Soviet policies towards Iran in the 1960s.<sup>21</sup> State Department analysis in 1968 argued that 'The *thrust* of current Soviet policy toward Iran aimed at encouraging the Shah to follow a more "independent" foreign policy: to *arouse his suspicions* of US policies and motives, *solicit* his support for Soviet foreign policy positions, and offer him aid and trade on *attractive* terms.' In light of this the paper concluded that '*penetration* of Iran's economic/industrial sector appears to be a primary objective of the Soviet Union.'<sup>22</sup>

In one meeting to discuss arms sales, Armin Meyer rejected the Shah's contention that the US 'should realize that by getting Soviets to contribute to Iran's strength, he was in fact improving Iran's capability of resisting Commie penetration.' The American ambassador then took the sexualised metaphor of 'penetration' to its logical conclusion, telling the Shah that 'it is difficult "to be [just a] little bit pregnant."' <sup>23</sup> The fear for American policymakers was that their Iranian partner might be susceptible to Soviet advances. By suggesting that 'penetration' by Moscow would result in an unwanted pregnancy for Tehran, Meyer was using gendered notions to highlight and emphasise the threat posed by the overtly masculine Soviet Union and the inability of the feminine Iran to resist.

None of this is to suggest that policymakers' – conscious or unconscious – considerations of gender supersede economic, political, strategic, military, domestic, and other cultural factors in the decision-making process. Besides, as Rotter points out, 'the makers of American foreign policy, mostly men, do not talk explicitly about gender issues or intentionally use a gendered vocabulary when they discuss their policies towards other countries.'<sup>24</sup> It is more, as Robert Dean asserts, that conscious and unconscious attitudes towards and expectations of gender 'must be understood not as an independent *cause* of

policy decisions, but as part of the very fabric of reasoning employed by officeholders.’<sup>25</sup> Or as Heiss has written, gendered ‘stereotypes were part of the context within which [Anglo-American] officials formulated policy’ towards Iran.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, Costigliola warns against the ‘premise that there must be single, clear, unequivocal causes for policies and actions, and that one can attribute those causes to the conscious decision of unitary agents.’<sup>27</sup> Ideas about gender, often ingrained from early childhood, contribute to this ‘fabric of reasoning’ through which individuals navigate imagined realities.

In addition to the scholarship on metaphor, language, and gender already outlined, Costigliola’s exploration of the role of Pamela Churchill in creating and sustaining the US-UK wartime special relationship is particularly useful for highlighting the question of ‘intimacy’ in American foreign relations.<sup>28</sup> Costigliola discusses how Churchill ‘cultivated intimacy – in the form of overlapping networks of sexual relationships, flirtations, and paternal ties – that made her a go-between for secret information and informal negotiations.’<sup>29</sup> By tracing Churchill’s ability to adeptly exploit various personal relationships – sometimes sexual, always intimate – to further strengthen the diplomatic relationship between Washington and London, Costigliola argues that ‘engaging in intimacy and sexuality with a partner generally lowers a person’s inhibitions and renders them more likely to trust and share secrets with that partner.’<sup>30</sup> Intimacy, therefore, can be considered a vital component of a close relationship.

Although the case being looked at here does not involve the same sexual relations that were integral to Pamela Churchill’s informal diplomacy, the *perception* of intimacy is equally apparent in the discussions and decision-making processes of American policymakers. While not seeking or utilising sexual relationships in their policies towards Iran, US officials did actively encourage and attempt to construct an intimate relationship with Tehran. This was done primarily through the Shah himself, who by the mid-1960s had consolidated his position

as the single most important decision-maker in Iranian domestic and foreign policy. As Sibley notes, 'perceptions and realities of intimate personal relationships ... can both influence foreign policies and reflect them.'<sup>31</sup> It is the perceptions and realities of the relationship between the United States and the Shah of Iran that interest me here.

By building on Andrew Warne's analysis of the Kennedy administration's orientalist assessments of the Shah, this article illustrates how these concepts were integrated into a highly gendered discourse in official and diplomatic correspondence. As Edward Said theorised, western observers have often "accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, 'mind,' destiny, and so on."<sup>32</sup> Said describes how "the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience."<sup>33</sup> According to Said, in western imaginations and depictions the Middle East, and elsewhere, has been constructed with a deliberate sense of 'otherness' that acts as a point of contrast with western culture. By defining Middle Eastern people and cultures as backward or uncivilised, irrational or violent, western observers were by extension defining precisely what their own culture was not.

Like their European counterparts, American policymakers often viewed the Middle East and Iran through an Orientalist lens. For the purposes of this article, an important dimension of this type of Orientalism manifested in their use of highly gendered terms when discussing Iranian culture and people. Indeed, State Department records, CIA reports, NSC memoranda, and telegrams from the US embassy in Tehran demonstrate how American constructs regarding ideals of masculinity and femininity were used by policymakers to describe, define, and understand the Shah. Following Edward Said's thesis, by characterising the Shah as having a range of undesirable feminine traits, US policymakers were implicitly outlining desirable masculine (read, American) characteristics. These gendered assessments

were then incorporated into policies which responded to or sought to resolve the Shah's perceived – and feminine - weaknesses.

One example of this was the 'massage' policy, which was adopted by both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. Designed to resolve the so-called 'massage problem,' US policymakers, notably LBJ's National Security Adviser, Robert Komer, advised 'massaging' the Shah's ego in order to persuade him of America's interest in Iran, keep him happy, and influence him on domestic and foreign policy issues. The key tool for 'massaging' the Shah was the use of presidential letters, which both Kennedy and Johnson sent to the Iranian leader. Based on psychological assessments that framed the Shah's personality in highly gendered terms, these letters provided Washington with the opportunity to use 'massage' to strengthen the US-Iranian relationship.

By also focusing on the use of metaphors of marriage or a relationship between lovers by American officials, this article further highlights the significance of concepts of gender in discussing how US policymakers understood and explained US-Iranian relations. However, by the mid-1960s American officials were beginning to merge their gendered assessments of the Shah, which used coded language to frame him as overly feminine, with analysis that infantilised him. Through psychological and orientalist assessments that highlighted and denigrated the Shah's alleged feminine characteristics, US policymakers took the next step of depicting him in childlike terms.

As Kristin Hoganson has argued, there is a long history of American foreign policy officials using language to stereotype and denigrate non-Americans as childlike. In her assessment of US policy towards the Philippines in the late nineteenth-century, Hoganson describes how Americans 'cast [Filipinos] as children, the implication being that they could not be left to their own devices.' Hoganson cites one US Senator as arguing that 'Filipinos were no more able to govern themselves than primary school children were able to administer

public school systems.' She adds that such infantilisation had domestic origins, paralleling 'long-standing images of African Americans as children who were too immature to participate in government of Native Americans as wards of the state. In all these cases, depicting a people as childlike implied that they lacked the manly character necessary to govern themselves.'<sup>34</sup>

Similarly, the infantilisation of women within western, including American, society was ingrained during the nineteenth-century and was further exaggerated in Cold War America through the spread of cultural norms associating traits such as innocence, naivety, and youth with femininity.<sup>35</sup> For US policymakers, the lines between gendered and infantilising language became increasingly blurred as tensions with Iran heightened in 1965 and 1966. Throughout this period, however, US policy was based upon the assumption that Washington needed to maintain an intimate relationship with the Shah. At the very least, the cultivation of the *perception* of intimacy was considered vital. The pursuit of intimacy by American policymakers intersected with their use of metaphors such as 'massage' and 'marriage', thereby placing gendered language and concepts of masculinity and femininity at the centre of how Washington viewed the US-Iranian relationship during the 1960s.

For much of the Cold War, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi was seen as both a permanent fixture of and ultimate authority in Iranian politics by American policymakers. Coming to power in 1941 at just twenty-one years old when his father, Reza Shah, was forced to abdicate by the British, it was not until the CIA-sponsored coup in 1953, which removed Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadeq, that the last Shah began the process of strengthening his position as the most powerful man in Iran. Subsequently, the Eisenhower administration utilised a combination of economic aid, military assistance, and technical expertise to help the Shah consolidate his regime and turn Iran into a viable client state.<sup>36</sup> Between 1953 and

1961, Washington reinforced the Shah's rule by providing \$436 million of military assistance, \$345 million of economic assistance, and \$266 million of loans.<sup>37</sup>

Given its location along the Soviet border and vast oil reserves, Iran was central to American plans for the Middle East in the post-war world. Recognising the Shah's prominence, US officials sought to understand him in order to strengthen US-Iranian relations. Andrew Warne has highlighted the centrality of psychological assessments and pseudo-scientific analysis to US perceptions of Pahlavi Iran during the Cold War.<sup>38</sup> The Kennedy administration's Iran Task Force, which was responsible for Washington's brief emphasis on modernization and development in US-Iranian relations, relied on these psychological assessments to lend credibility to its policy recommendations.

As historians Stephen McGlinchey and Claudia Castiglioni have noted, the transition between Kennedy and Johnson was largely one of continuity in terms of American policy towards Iran.<sup>39</sup> While for a short period the Kennedy administration sought to push the Shah towards a reformist agenda, US policy during the 1960s focused on maintaining close ties with the Iranian leader. As Iran's oil income expanded in the middle of the decade, its reliance on American economic assistance declined. Recognising the Shah's enthusiasm for military purchases, American policymakers prioritised the use of arms sales as a key means of strengthening US-Iranian relations. In 1964 the Johnson administration agreed to extend \$200 million in credit for arms sales to Tehran, which was followed by another deal for the same amount two years later. In 1968, an additional five-year agreement was reached that provided Iran with \$100 million in credit annually.<sup>40</sup>

According to Andrew Johns, "By the late 1960s, the relationship had been completely transformed from a strictly patron-client dynamic to an arrangement approaching equality. Two developments lay behind this change. First, Iran was increasingly able to purchase most of its arms from the United States, thanks to expanded oil revenues and progress in economic

development. Second, U.S. officials sensed that, at a time when U.S. military forces were heavily committed elsewhere in the world [namely, in Vietnam], a strong, pro-Western Iran would be conducive to American interests in the Middle East."<sup>41</sup>

Although the Johnson administration placed a greater emphasis on arms sales than did the Kennedy administration, both recognised the significance of the Shah in any calculation regarding US-Iranian relations. As such, policymakers in the Johnson administration also adopted language that emphasised the psychological challenges facing US policy in Iran. For example, US embassy officials in Tehran explained that the Shah's 'increased interest in the Persian Gulf' was a result of his 'almost pathological fear...that [Egyptian President Gamal Abdel] Nasser may be able to project not only his influence but also his military power into that area.'<sup>42</sup> For the Shah, Nasser's radical brand of socialist pan-Arabism represented both an existential and potential military threat. By 'diagnosing' the Shah's fear as 'pathological,' American diplomats gave their assertions more credibility and weight than if they had simply said the Shah was afraid of Nasser. At the same time, the term 'pathological,' meaning compulsive, extreme or unreasonable, undermined the legitimacy of the Shah's fears.

Two years later, a Central Intelligence Agency memorandum argued that 'Psychological and political factors have led the Shah to believe that Arab nationalism presents a "clear and present danger" to Iranian security.' At the heart of these psychological analyses was the significance of the Shah's personality to Iranian foreign policy. He was described as 'bitterly' resentful of Nasser's popularity and felt 'insulted' by the UAR's rejection of relations with Iran six years previously.<sup>43</sup> Three months later, responding to the most recent Iranian overtures to purchase increasingly sophisticated technology from the US, Ambassador Armin Meyer used similar psychological language mixed with an emphasis on intimate emotion to describe the Shah's 'almost pathological desire for F-4 aircraft.'<sup>44</sup> Capitalising upon the Shah's 'desire' for F-4s, Meyer was able to dissuade the Shah from

turning to the Soviet Union for the purchase of sophisticated arms, which would have jeopardised further US arms sales to Tehran.

By utilising language borrowed and adapted from the social sciences American policymakers in the 1950s and 1960s, according to Warne, updated traditional Orientalist notions to fit their less overtly racist sensibilities. Assessing the Iran Task Force that was established by John F. Kennedy early in his presidency to critique and formulate policy towards Iran, Warne has shown "how psychological ideas, language, and concepts came to replace older, less-acceptable race-based Orientalist views, even as those new scientific explanations sometimes mingled intimately with older ones."<sup>45</sup> Psychological assessments and Orientalist assumptions therefore sat side by side, distinctions often blurred by their shared conclusions about Iranian inadequacies. Recalling US policy towards Iran under Eisenhower, Colonel Gratian Yatsevich remarked that 'the Iranians are a mixture of peoples who really are more or less dependent on an authoritarian type of government at this stage of their evolution.'<sup>46</sup> The implication here echoes Orientalist tropes that Iran and Iranians were less evolved than westerners, thereby justifying US support for the Pahlavi regime's authoritarian rule.

A message to Lyndon Johnson from Walt Rostow in July 1966 in response to the Shah's latest efforts to purchase more arms from Washington highlights again the intersection between modern scientific language and traditional Orientalism. Rostow told the President that 'the real problem is the psychological one you are so familiar with. When the Shah feels cut off from you, he reads our every act as a rebuff.' Tehran's discussions with Moscow about purchasing Soviet arms, however, 'may [simply] be rug-merchant bargaining' and therefore Rostow advised Johnson not to become involved.<sup>47</sup> On the one hand, the Shah is portrayed as weak-willed and temperamental, while on the other he is portrayed as a canny negotiator, albeit from the conniving Oriental model.



Indeed, many US policymakers throughout the 1960s viewed Iran through an Orientalist lens. Writing in August 1961 about the economic instability and political unrest, marked by widespread protests, that had followed the brief tenure of Jafar Sharif-Emami, Ambassador Julius Holmes complained that the newly appointed Prime Minister, Ali Amini, ‘must work in the Persian atmosphere and must deal principally with other Persians in attempting to resolve the problems facing him. I need not dwell in this letter on those aspects of their character which make it so hard for Iranians to work together, to plan for the future, and to take drastic action when drastic action is necessary.’ Defending Amini’s limited success, Holmes went on: ‘for one reason, I do not see how anybody, and particularly a Persian dealing with Persians, could have begun to make significant progress towards this goal in the chaotic situation in which the Amini regime came into office and in the short time it has been in power.’ Commenting on how the United States could assist Amini, Holmes again resorted to Orientalist analysis: ‘we can be of help to him by aiding him in his material difficulties while largely leaving him, as a Persian dealing with other Persians and with Persian political problems, to solve the latter in the way he deems most likely to be successful. Steps which might seem logical to non-Iranian outside observers will, I am convinced, in many instances not be found to be appropriate in this process.’<sup>48</sup>

Iranians then, according to Holmes, were incapable of teamwork, forward thinking, and assertiveness. Their inability to ‘take drastic action’ combined Holmes’s Orientalism with a Cold War American preference for men of action. Assertiveness, action and aggression all denoted an admirable masculinity, while the lack of these qualities indicated an unworthy femininity. Moreover, Holmes’s aside (‘I need not dwell in this letter’) suggested that his views concerning Iranian inadequacies were common. US policymakers continued throughout the decade to attribute poor decision-making by their Iranian counterparts to something inherently Persian. For example, Holmes’s successor as ambassador to Tehran,

Meyer, complained in 1968 that ‘Unfortunately traditional Persian disposition is to suspect and then eliminate, or at least quarantine, any diversity of thought.’<sup>49</sup> Poor decisions, then, were explained by a ‘traditional Persian disposition’, which thereby accounted for the difficulty Washington had overcoming such ingrained obstacles.

These assessments of Iranians by US policymakers were mirrored in the language they used to discuss the Shah. In January 1962, the Chairman of the Iran Task Force, Phillips Talbot, reported that ‘Despite the Shah’s good intentions, patriotism, and intelligence, he remains essentially mystical, vain, and suspicious.’<sup>50</sup> The combination of eastern mysticism (as opposed to western logic and rationalism) and feminine vanity painted an image of the Shah, in Talbot’s eyes, of an unreliable leader. Moreover, his unreliability stemmed precisely from his feminine qualities.

While these examples serve to highlight the reinforcing relationship between the use of psychology and Orientalism by US policymakers, they also demonstrate the extent to which American attitudes towards Iran were increasingly predicated upon and formed in response to US perceptions of the Shah’s personality. In many ways, the question of whether US assessments of the Shah’s psychological disposition were accurate is less important than the fact that Washington’s policies were built upon their foundations.

Throughout the 1960s, US policymakers surveying the political situation in Iran placed the Shah’s personality (and therefore his psychological makeup) at the heart of their assessments. Particularly in the early part of the decade, these appraisals highlighted the reluctance with which Washington supported the Shah. For example, an influential report drafted by John Bowling in March 1961 argued that ‘The Shah, though highly intelligent, is emotionally insecure.’<sup>51</sup> Compliments regarding his positive traits sat alongside criticisms, which were often gendered and based exclusively on his personality. In this case, Bowling

highlighted the Shah's emotional nature, which was a coded reference to undesirable feminine qualities.

Despite their lack of faith in him, US policymakers did note his importance in terms of maintaining the stability of Iranian politics. In one of the embassy's semi-annual assessments of the political situation in Iran, Martin F. Herz revealed one of the games that members of the Political Section played 'from time to time': each official would 'establish a listing of the "twenty most important persons" in Iran at that particular moment.' After reporting some changes since the last list, Herz concluded that 'There is of course no disagreement about who heads the list. The Shah is still number one, number two and number three, all rolled into one.'<sup>52</sup> US policy towards Iran was therefore centred explicitly on its relationship with the Shah. As such, the emphasis placed on maintaining a close relationship with the Iranian leader was met with consensus across the administration. Even so, the Shah was frequently described in quite critical terms. Intersecting with the Orientalist and psychological assessments discussed above, US policymakers used gendered and coded language that framed the Shah as overly feminine, thereby diminishing his capacity as a political leader from an American policymaking perspective that prized traditionally masculine traits and deplored characteristics more commonly associated with women.<sup>53</sup>

Writing in March 1962, as tensions between the Shah and Amini increased and domestic unrest spread, Ambassador Holmes lamented that 'We are faced here with a situation where we are obliged to lean on a weak reed but I see no other one on which we may rely to accomplish our objectives.' The Shah, according to Holmes, was simply not 'in fact big enough for the job in hand.'<sup>54</sup> References to the Shah's weakness and stature can be understood as coded assertions that he simply was not *manly* enough. Kenneth Hansen, Director of the Bureau of Budget, suggested that 'given the irrational nature of the Shah' he 'might be driven by jealousy to jettison [Prime Minister] Amini.' Where rational thinking

would be a desirable attribute in a political leader, an irrational and jealous nature conjured up images of an emotional and flighty woman – not traits regarded highly by US policymakers during the Cold War. While Holmes would argue that the Shah's nature (understood in both Orientalist and gendered terms) necessitated greater American support for and patience with the Iranian leader, Hansen and others would argue that those same traits meant the US needed to be more forceful with the Shah. That Holmes, who would become one of the Shah's firmest American supporters, and Hansen, who consistently took a much more critical view, both utilised similarly gendered language to describe the Shah highlights the prevalence of such perspectives in US policymaking circles.

Policymakers continued to emphasise Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's emotionality, thereby illustrating the importance of American perspectives of his personality in framing US policy towards Iran. Following one particularly tense meeting, Meyer described the Shah as 'smouldering.'<sup>55</sup> At other times, the Shah's 'grievances' regarding US policy were dismissed as 'ill-founded and over-dramatized.'<sup>56</sup> Being irrational and dramatic, in American eyes at least, were negative traits more commonly associated with women and therefore unwelcome in men. CIA reports also frequently focused on the Shah's personality. In 1966, a CIA intelligence memorandum assessing the impact of a potential Soviet-Iranian arms deal on US relations with Tehran claimed that 'In the months after any such an agreement, nearly any occurrence which appears to the hypersensitive Shah to indicate lack of US sympathy for Iran will be seized upon as evidence of US "retaliation."<sup>57</sup> Hypersensitive, dramatic, irrational, emotional, jealous, vain, weak – hardly the idealised masculine traits American policymakers sought in their Cold War allies. These assessments echoed criticisms of Mossadeq during the oil nationalisation crisis in the early 1950s as having a 'fragile and emotional temperament,' being 'moody, impractical, and unrealistic,' or, more bluntly, adopting 'negative and feminine tactics.'<sup>58</sup> However, a number of reports throughout the decade had made clear that the Shah

was the only viable leader in Iran and therefore the only means through which the United States could achieve its economic and security goals in the country, *in spite* of his deficiencies.

One recurring tactic used by American policymakers in response to the Shah's weaknesses was the use of flattery. Such a policy would, in theory, appeal to aspects of the Shah's personality – or at least, American *perceptions* of his personality – which needed mollifying. Concerned by what they saw as the Shah's fragile ego and temperamental nature, US officials in the 1960s frequently referred to the so-called 'massage problem' – in other words, the need to 'massage' the Shah in order to, variously, strengthen his resolve, flatter him, sweeten an unwelcome policy, or simply to keep him happy and content with the state of US-Iranian relations. During the early 1960s, a key component of this according to Robert Komer would be to exploit 'the Kennedy flair' to 'reassure' the Shah of US support for his regime.<sup>59</sup> However, as a background paper prepared for the Shah's visit to the United States in June 1964 noted, he 'needs repeated reassurances' in order 'to convince him of his status as a full ally and confidant of the United States.'<sup>60</sup> Or, as Komer wrote to McGeorge Bundy in January 1963, 'It's been a long time since we last massaged the Shah, so his reform programme and referendum provide a first-class occasion for JFK to do so (and to remind him that Big Brother is watching).'<sup>61</sup> 'Massage,' then had a dual purpose: to flatter and reassure the Shah; and to demonstrate American interest in Iran, reminding the Shah who the senior partner in their relationship was.

As many of Kennedy's foreign policy advisers were kept on by Lyndon Johnson there was considerable continuity in their approach towards Iran. Noting the Shah's 'resultant nervousness' following Kennedy's assassination, Komer suggested supporting a proposal by the University of California to confer an honorary degree on the Iranian leader.<sup>62</sup> The honour would be a mild form of flattery, as well as giving the new Johnson administration an

opportunity to further reassure the Shah of Washington's continued interest in maintaining close ties with Tehran. As Komer pointed out in a brief message to Johnson, it would 'give you a chance to have him to lunch and an hour's chat. I'd strongly so urge because, as you know, our position in Iran largely depends on this nervous monarch. Also he's always responded well to the friendly message you and President Kennedy have given him.'<sup>63</sup> As such, the policy of 'massage' became central to US efforts throughout the 1960s to cultivate and maintain an intimate – or at least, the perception of an intimate – relationship with the Shah.

Responding to intelligence and embassy reports that highlighted the Shah's vanity, both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations used presidential letters as an important way to 'massage' the Shah and cultivate this sense of intimacy. Following Amini's resignation as prime minister in July 1962 after a protracted struggle with the Shah over Iran's military expenditure, Kennedy wrote to the Shah to stress the importance of economic reform and explain Washington's position on military assistance to Tehran. It was a time, said the president, for "bold decisions and the assumption of great responsibilities." Despite serious concerns about the Shah's ability to govern and the independence of the new prime minister, Asadollah Alam, Kennedy declared that he had "full confidence... in Iran's ability to make such decisions and assume such responsibilities, no matter how difficult they may be."<sup>64</sup> The letter was designed with two purposes in mind. On the one hand, it reminded the Shah of the importance of continuing down the path of reform embarked upon by Amini. Indeed, it was supposed to put pressure on the Shah to pursue meaningful reform and, perhaps, as Komer would later put it, remind him that 'Big Brother was watching.' On the other hand, Kennedy's letter served to massage the Shah by reassuring him that the White House was on his side.

However, as the decade wore on there was a realisation in Washington that, for all his faults, the Shah was gaining in confidence. As early as January 1963, American policymakers recognised that US influence over the Shah was already beginning to decline. Noting that the Shah had “apparently decided to wrap himself firmly in [the] mantle of ‘revolutionary monarch,’” Komer warned that he had also “decided he’ll have his own revolution without US advice.”<sup>65</sup> Less than two weeks later, the Shah held a nationwide referendum on his sweeping reform programme known as the White Revolution, which reaffirmed his confidence. According to the official tally, 99.9% of Iranians voted in support of the reforms. Kennedy sent a letter to the Shah offering his congratulations. The president noted that it must be ‘gratifying to learn that a vast majority has supported your leadership in a clear and open expression of their will.’ Moreover, Kennedy asserted that the referendum ‘should renew your confidence in the rightness of your course... in the struggle to better the lot of your people.’<sup>66</sup> Despite sharing a dim view of the Shah, American policymakers believed that it was necessary for the United States to cultivate an intimate relationship with Tehran through the use of diplomatic ‘massage.’ While Kennedy’s letter alluded to the importance of improving Iran’s economic situation, it adhered closely to the basic tenets of the massage policy by reassuring the Shah that he was on the right side of history.

In November 1963, President Kennedy sent a final letter ‘designed to massage’ the Shah; it was, in part, an effort to undercut the impact that visits to Iran by French President Charles De Gaulle and Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev might have on the Shah’s perspective of his relationship with the United States. The first draft written by the State Department was dismissed by Komer as ‘a long rather gooey letter’ that ‘read like an eighteenth century diplomatic note.’<sup>67</sup> Komer informed Bundy that he had ‘done major editorial surgery... but have left [the] letter long because this counts so with our Mideast friends.’<sup>68</sup> However, in spite of Komer’s concerns that the letter was too ‘gooey,’ the final version embraced the

policy of massage by seeking the Shah's opinion on a number of significant international developments, including the Test Ban Treaty, Berlin, the Sino-Soviet schism. It went on to suggest that the Shah was on 'the right track' in his domestic policies and that the president felt a 'deep sense...that history is moving with us [i.e. the US and Iran, JFK and the Shah].'<sup>69</sup> Once more, Kennedy – or at least his advisers – sought to flatter the Shah and stroke his ego in order to foster an intimate relationship. Although JFK was not as friendly with the Shah as Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon would later be, the policy of 'massage' helped to overcome the Shah's initial concerns about the new, young, revolutionary president. While the start of Kennedy's presidency saw the US-Iranian relationship enter some choppy waters, by the time he lost his life it had been put back on a relatively even keel.

Following the precedent sent by JFK, Lyndon Johnson sent a letter to the Shah in March 1964 that, according to Komer, 'massaged him on his reforms (which are hopeful), and gently urged him to keep up the good work.'<sup>70</sup> Indeed, the president's letter noted that the Shah's 'whole program of social reform is highly regarded here' and 'Iran seems the brightest spot in the Middle East these days.' It ended with a quote from a letter by George Washington to the French Marshal Rochambeau who helped secure American victory at the battle of Yorktown: 'We have been contemporaries and fellow laborers in the cause of liberty and we have lived together as brothers should do in harmonious friendship.'<sup>71</sup> Citing America's first, and one of her most esteemed, presidents was no doubt done deliberately to appeal to the Shah's ego. While the letter also rejected the Shah's latest request for an increase in arms sales, it sought to cultivate and maintain at least the perception of an intimate relationship with the Iranian leader.

These efforts to 'massage' the Shah and cultivate the perception of intimacy converged with another metaphor that was often used to describe the US-Iranian relationship, that of a marriage. At other times, it was likened to a sometimes-rocky relationship between lovers.



Both these metaphors – ‘massage’ and ‘marriage’ – were fluid in their use by US officials, the changing context giving rise to different meanings and intentions. Yet both were used fairly consistently throughout the decade to describe and define US policy towards Iran and US-Iranian relations.

Both Americans and Iranians framed the relationship between their two countries in this way at times. In one meeting with President Kennedy, the Shah expressed concern and confusion ‘that America treats Turkey as a wife, and Iran as a concubine.’<sup>72</sup> The Shah, perhaps reluctantly, was acknowledging that American officials gendered Iran as female, which presumably irked the Iranian monarch whose efforts to present himself as a military man suggest he wanted to be considered a valued (read, masculine) partner. However, in April 1965, assessing the Shah’s limited progress in terms of development and reform, Harold Saunders wrote that ‘essentially we’re in the honeymoon period of a clearly rocky marriage.’<sup>73</sup> Throughout 1965 and 1966 US policymakers increasingly resorted to analogies of marriage and/or personal relationships in order to highlight the importance of maintaining an intimate relationship with the Shah, or at least the perception of one.

Although traditional accounts have portrayed Johnson’s relationship with the Shah as much closer than Kennedy’s, historians such as Stephen McGlinchey have suggested that in actual fact the mid-1960s represented the real ‘nadir’ in US-Iranian relations.<sup>74</sup> As Robert Komer remarked in a memo to the president in September 1965, the Shah was ‘currently in one of his periodic moods [where he believes] that the US doesn’t love him enough.’<sup>75</sup> Later that month, Johnson met with the Iranian Ambassador, Khosro Khosrovani, ‘to make a big splash over the 25th anniversary of the Shah’s coming to the throne.’ Noting that ‘whenever he worries about his destiny he begins to see rust on his westward anchor,’ Komer advised that in light of Soviet efforts to improve relations with Tehran it was important that the US reassure the Shah of their support.<sup>76</sup> Komer’s advice was similar to that which, in the 1960s,

one might have given to a male friend whose relationship with his wife was rocky because she felt he did not love her enough – flatter her and make a big fuss of her anniversary.

However, ‘massage’ alone was not enough to smooth over tensions. In part, this was due to the Shah’s efforts to adjust Iran’s ‘foreign policy so as to avoid image of being “American stooges.”’<sup>77</sup> Indeed, this can be interpreted as analogous to a husband and wife relationship of the time, where the latter wishes to be seen as autonomous from their husband, rather than merely an extension of them with no volition of their own. In tense meetings with embassy officials the Shah complained that Iran was ‘treated by [the] West in general and US in particular “like a colony.”’ A long-awaited bilateral deal with Moscow in 1965 to fund a steel mill near Isfahan was treated by the Iranian press as ‘in effect breaking chains which for 40 years have prevented Iranians from having steel industry.’ The steel mill, which promised to bolster Iran’s economic and industrial autonomy, had according to Ambassador Meyer been ‘dramatized as an Iranian declaration of independence.’ Given the Shah’s concerns about being treated like a colony, such sentiment could be interpreted as a coded warning to the United States about the evolving US-Iranian relationship. Tehran did not rely on Washington’s support in the mid-sixties nearly to the same extent as she had done at the beginning of the decade or in the mid-fifties. Iran’s economy was steadily improving thanks to an increase in income from the country’s oil industry. At the same time, American economic assistance was winding down, while military grants were being replaced with credit. As Meyer observed, ‘for one thing we no longer have leverage of large-scale foreign aid. For another Shah is not in need of us as he was previously.’<sup>78</sup> By November, the Shah told Meyer that ‘he had [an] uneasy feeling [of] growing estrangement between [the] US and Iran,’ an assessment with which the ambassador concurred.<sup>79</sup> The reference to a ‘growing estrangement’ conjures an image of a couple drifting apart or a husband and wife not yet divorced but no longer partners.

As tensions between the two countries increased, US policymakers resorted to gendered language to describe the Shah's actions. His negative reaction to a delay by the United States in deciding the level of interest to apply to the latest round of arms sales was explained away as 'moodiness.'<sup>80</sup> In early 1966, Meyer would describe the Shah as being in a 'dark mood.'<sup>81</sup> Reviewing a speech given by the Shah to the Iranian majlis in which he asserted Iran's independence (again, a coded reference to Tehran's relationship with Washington), Meyer warned that his 'tone is getting shriller.'<sup>82</sup> Tensions continued into the summer as negotiations within the Johnson administration over how much credit to offer Iran for a new arms deal finally reached their conclusion. The State Department's more generous offer of \$330 million had previously been rejected in favour of the Defence Department's figure of \$200 million. The final stumbling block was over whether to spread the costs over three years, as the State Department wanted, or four annual sums of \$50 million as preferred by Defence. With the decision made to go with the Defence Department's more stringent offer, as well as a higher interest rate than that favoured by the State Department, Howard Wriggins of the National Security Council Staff wryly commented, 'The Shah may scream.'<sup>83</sup> Describing the Shah's 'moodiness,' 'shrill tone' of voice, and suggesting he would 'scream' when given bad news served to create an image of a leader that did not match traditional American concepts of masculinity. Instead, just as earlier descriptions of him as hypersensitive, dramatic, irrational, emotional, jealous, vain, and weak had done, such highly gendered language painted him in a feminine - and therefore negative - light. However, because US policymakers saw no alternative and had become so invested in their relationship with the Shah, these gendered and negative descriptions simply reinforced the importance of maintaining at least the perception of an intimate relationship with the Iranian leader.

In July 1966, Vice President Hubert Humphrey met with one of the Shah's brothers and 'several other well informed friends of Iran' who urged him to 'Please tell the President that

unless something happens to change his mind, the Shah is going to buy a package of Soviet arms on the relatively easy credit they dangle in front of him.’ Concerned about the repercussions of such a move on the US-Iranian relationship, Humphrey told the president, ‘In the present circumstances I feel it would be wonderful if you would invite the Shah to come talk to you. He wants to hear from you personally what a grand guy he is, and how much you love him.’<sup>84</sup> Humphrey’s advice framed the relationship between Johnson and the Shah as extraordinarily intimate; one where the president of the United States can tell the head of state of another country that he loves him. While Humphrey was not expecting Johnson to *literally* tell the Shah he loves him, this image aligned with the depiction of US-Iranian relations as akin to a marriage or relationship between lovers. That same week, Walt Rostow wrote to LBJ to warn that the Shah ‘feels neglected and taken for granted.’<sup>85</sup> When the Shah tried to persuade Meyer that the US public could be persuaded of the wisdom of Iran purchasing non-sophisticated arms from the Soviet Union, the American ambassador retorted that such a move would more likely to be interpreted as stemming from the ‘bitterness of [a] jilted lover.’<sup>86</sup> By referring to the US-Iranian relationship in terms similar to one between lovers, American policymakers highlighted the gendered power imbalance between the two countries.

## **Conclusion**

The language that American officials used to describe the Shah sheds light on how US policy was informed by highly gendered assessments of the Iranian leader, which framed his flaws in archetypally feminine terms. By viewing the Shah through an Orientalist and gendered lens, both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations sought to overcome these perceived feminine deficiencies. As tensions between Washington and Tehran continued in

the mid-1960s, the feminising of the Shah by US policymakers was increasingly blurred with infantilisation, just as their Orientalism had been conflated with gendered assessments. Once again, these assessments were reminiscent of Anglo-American descriptions of Mossadeq as a 'fractious child' which emphasised his 'childishness and immaturity.'<sup>87</sup> By describing both Mossadeq and the Shah as childlike, US officials revealed much about their perceptions of US-Iranian relations. While perhaps not going quite so far as suggesting Iranians required benevolent tutelage in the way that Hoganson has recounted earlier American descriptions of Filipinos, it indicates, as Heiss has argued, an underlying assumption of superiority.<sup>88</sup>

In his memorandum to Lyndon Johnson noting that the Shah was feeling 'neglected,' Rostow also observed that he 'sees these negotiations as a way to gain attention.' Similarly, Humphrey followed his advice that the president should tell the Shah 'how much you love him' with the observation that 'He wants to tell you his fears and he needs to be reassured by you.' Both Rostow and Humphrey's language creates the image of a child seeking either attention or reassurance from a father figure. The assertion by Howard Wriggins that 'The Shah seems petulantly bent on asserting his independence' further reinforced the infantilising of the Shah by American policymakers, calling to mind a rebellious teenager seeking autonomy from their parents and acting out immaturely.<sup>89</sup> The implication was that in order to pursue US goals in Iran the Shah either needed coddling or scolding.

Indeed, in a three-hour meeting with Kermit Roosevelt, the Shah complained that he was 'tired of being treated like a schoolboy.'<sup>90</sup> During negotiations with Washington regarding Iran's military programme, the Shah lamented Washington's 'papa knows best' attitude.<sup>91</sup> The Shah's complaint identified the paternalistic and patronising nature of US policymakers. It was both a comment on his own sense of insecurity and American attitudes. The Shah was conflating the United States as both teacher and father figure, acknowledging Washington's power and authority while at the same time rejecting the Johnson

administration's misplaced sense of responsibility for Iranian politics. Not only did such perceptions contribute to a distorted understanding of the Shah, one obvious drawback of American perceptions of the Shah as being childlike was that policymakers risked giving *him the impression of being treated like a child*. The impulse to infantilise and consider the Shah childlike, shared DNA with the tendency to use highly gendered and Orientalist language to describe and understand him. Therefore by analysing the common use of language that feminised and infantilised the Shah we can better understand both the fraught nature of the US-Iranian relationship during the mid-1960s and how such language reflected and informed US policy.

---

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Memorandum of Conversation, 12 April 1962, Doc. 243. Nina J. Noring, ed., *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961–1963, Volume XVII, Near East, 1961–1962* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1994). [Hereafter referred to as *FRUS Vol. XVII*]

<sup>2</sup> George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1980), 3.

<sup>3</sup> Frank Costigliola, 'Reading for Meaning: Theory, Language, and Metaphor,' in Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Paterson (eds), *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004; 2<sup>nd</sup> edition), 281.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 288.

<sup>5</sup> Jimmy Carter: "Tehran, Iran Toasts of the President and the Shah at a State Dinner.," 31 December 1977. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=7080>. George W. Bush: "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union," 29 January 2002. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29644>. Accessed 10 October 2017.

<sup>6</sup> Emily Rosenberg, 'Gender,' *The Journal of American History*, 77.1 (June 1990), 116-124; Andrew Rotter, 'Gender Relations, Foreign Relations: The United States and South Asia, 1947-1964,' *The Journal of American History*, 81.2 (September 1994), 518-542.

<sup>7</sup> Katherine A.S. Sibley, 'Introduction: Gender and Sexuality in American Foreign Relations,' *Diplomatic History*, 36.4 (September 2012), 695.

---

<sup>8</sup> Rosenberg, 'Gender,' 119.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 121.

<sup>10</sup> Robert D. Dean, 'Masculinity as Ideology: John F. Kennedy and the Domestic Politics of Foreign Policy,' *Diplomatic History*, 22.1 (Winter 1998), 30.

<sup>11</sup> Kristin Hoganson, 'What's Gender Got to Do with It? Gender History as Foreign Relations History,' in Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Paterson (eds), *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004; 2<sup>nd</sup> edition), 304-322.

<sup>12</sup> Rosenberg, 'Gender,' 116-124.

<sup>13</sup> Rotter, 'Gender Relations, Foreign Relations,' 521.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 518-542.

<sup>15</sup> K.A. Cuordileone, "'Politics in an Age of Anxiety": Cold War Political Culture and the Crisis in American Masculinity, 1949-1960,' *The Journal of American History*, 87.2 (September 2000), 516.

<sup>16</sup> Dean, 'Masculinity as Ideology,' 62.

<sup>17</sup> Mary Ann Heiss, *Empire and Nationhood: The United States, Great Britain, and Iranian Oil, 1950-1954* (Columbia University Press, 1997), 229-233.

<sup>18</sup> For example, see Roham Alvandi, 'Flirting with Neutrality: The Shah, Khrushchev, and the Failed 1959 Soviet-Iranian Negotiations,' *Iranian Studies*, 47.3 (2014), 419-440.

<sup>19</sup> Memorandum of Conversation: Soviet Policies (Part I of II), 12 June 1968. Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library (Hereafter, LBJPL), Papers of LBJ, National Security File, Files of Harold H. Saunders, Box 4, Visit of Shah of Iran, June 11-12, 1968 (2 of 2).

<sup>20</sup> Memorandum to Secretary of State from Stuart Rockwell, 21 November 1963. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library (Hereafter, JFKPL), Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Countries, Box 116A (continued from Box 116), Iran General, 11-1-63 to 11-21-63.

<sup>21</sup> Frank Costigliola, "'Unceasing Pressure for Penetration": Gender, Pathology, and Emotion in George Kennan's Formation of the Cold War,' 83.4 (1997), 1309-1339.

<sup>22</sup> Visit of Amir Abbas Hoveyda, Prime Minister of Iran, 5-6 December 1968, Background Paper: Iran's Relations with Communist Countries, 27 November 1968. LBJPL, Papers of LBJ, National Security File, Country File, Box 138, Iran – Visit of PM Hoveyda of Iran (2 of 2), 12-5-6-68. (Emphasis added).

- 
- <sup>23</sup> Telegram From the Embassy in Iran to the Department of State, 7 July 1966, Doc. 151. Nina D. Howland, ed., *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964–1968, Volume XXII, Iran* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1999). [Hereafter referred to as *FRUS Vol. XXII*]
- <sup>24</sup> Rotter, 'Gender Relations, Foreign Relations,' 522.
- <sup>25</sup> Dean, 'Masculinity as Ideology,' 30.
- <sup>26</sup> Heiss, *Empire and Nationhood*, 233.
- <sup>27</sup> Frank Costigliola, "'Unceasing Pressure for Penetration": Gender, Pathology, and Emotion in George Kennan's Formation of the Cold War,' *The Journal of American History*, 83.4 (March 1997), 1338.
- <sup>28</sup> Frank Costigliola, 'Pamela Churchill, Wartime London, and the Making of the Special Relationship,' *Diplomatic History*, 36.4 (September 2012), 753-762.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, 754.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, 761.
- <sup>31</sup> Sibley, 'Introduction,' 696.
- <sup>32</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2001), 2-3.
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-2.
- <sup>34</sup> Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (Yale University Press, 1998), 135.
- <sup>35</sup> Cuordileone, 'Politics in an Age of Anxiety,' 131. For a proto-feminist articulation of how the infantilisation of women became entrenched in all areas of life in the long-nineteenth century, see Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women: With Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects* (1792).
- <sup>36</sup> Mark J. Gasiorowski, *U.S. Foreign Policy and the Shah: Building a Client State in Iran* (Cornell University Press, 1991).
- <sup>37</sup> Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy, 1941-1973: A Study of Foreign Policy in Modernizing Nations* (University Press of Virginia, 1975), 286.
- <sup>38</sup> Andrew Warne, "Psychoanalyzing Iran: Kennedy's Iran Task Force and the Modernization of Orientalism, 1961–3," *The International History Review*, 35.2 (2013), 396-422.
- <sup>39</sup> Stephen McGlinchey, *US Arms Policies Towards the Shah's Iran* (Routledge, 2014); Claudia Castiglioni, 'No longer a client, not yet a partner: the US–Iranian alliance in the Johnson years,' *Cold War History*, 15.4 (2015), 491-509. For recent scholarship on US-Iranian relations during the Cold War, also see Roham Alvandi, *Nixon, Kissinger, and the Shah: The United States and Iran in the Cold War* (Oxford University Press, 2014); David R.



---

Collier, *Democracy and the Nature of American Influence in Iran, 1941–1979* (Syracuse University Press, 2017); Matthew Shannon, *Losing Hearts and Minds: American-Iranian Relations and International Education During the Cold War* (Cornell University Press, 2017).

<sup>40</sup> Reference to author's previous work, published elsewhere.

<sup>41</sup> Andrew L. Johns, "The Johnson Administration, the Shah of Iran, and the Changing Pattern of U.S.-Iranian Relations, 1965–1967: 'Tired of Being Treated like a Schoolboy,'" *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 9.2 (Spring, 2007), 89.

<sup>42</sup> American Embassy Tehran to Department of State, 27 February 1964. College Park, MD, RG59, General Records of the Department of State, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966, Political and Defense, Box 2330, POL 1, Iran.

<sup>43</sup> Intelligence Memorandum, 21 May 1966, Doc. 139. *FRUS Vol. XXII*.

<sup>44</sup> Armin Meyer to Theodore L. Eliot, 12 August 1966. College Park, MD, RG59, General Records of the Department of State, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966, Political and Defense, Box 1733, Untitled Folder.

<sup>45</sup> Warne, 'Psychoanalyzing Iran,' 412.

<sup>46</sup> Interviewee: Colonel Gratian Yatsevich; Interviewer: William Burr, 5 November 1988 and 12 January 1989. Foundation for Iranian Studies Program of Oral History, 22.

<sup>47</sup> W.W. Rostow, Memorandum for the President, 14 July 1966. LBJPL, Papers of LBJ, National Security File, Country File, Box 136 (2 of 2), Iran – Memos and Miscellaneous (2 of 2), Vol. II, 1-66-1-69.

<sup>48</sup> Letter From the Ambassador to Iran (Holmes) to the Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Meyer), 27 August 1961, Doc. 102. *FRUS Vol. XVII*.

<sup>49</sup> Telegram From the Embassy in Iran to the Department of State, 5 March 1968, Doc. 263. *FRUS Vol. XXII*.

<sup>50</sup> Report of the Chairman of the Iran Task Force (Talbot), 18 January 1962, Doc. 168. *FRUS Vol. XVII*.

<sup>51</sup> Memorandum From the Vice Chairman of the Policy Planning Council (Morgan) to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy), 27 March 1961, Doc. 27. *FRUS Vol. XVII*. As Warne has noted, Bowling also provides one of the clearest psychological appraisals of 'the Iranian character,' using terms such as 'super-ego,' 'psychological roots,' and 'deep emotional needs' to argue that 'To take at face value the rationalizations of an Iranian middle class leader is as unrewarding as to accept the rationalizations of anti-Semites, Negro-haters, or communists in the United States.'

<sup>52</sup> Semi-Annual Assessment of the Political Situation in Iran, 6 August 1964, 6-7. LBJPL, Papers of LBJ, National Security File, Files of Robert W. Komer, Box 27, Iran – November 1963-December 1964 (1 of 2).

---

<sup>53</sup> For example, see Rotter, 'Gender Relations, Foreign Relations.'

<sup>54</sup> Telegram From the Embassy in Iran to the Department of State, 7 March 1962, Doc. 207. *FRUS Vol. XVII*.

<sup>55</sup> Telegram From the Embassy in Iran to the Department of State, 29 December 1967, Doc. 255. *FRUS Vol. XXII*.

<sup>56</sup> Telegram From the Embassy in Iran to the Department of State, 5 March 1968, Doc. 263. *FRUS Vol. XXII*.

<sup>57</sup> CIA Intelligence Memorandum: Iran, the Shah, and the Soviets, 27 July 1966. LBJPL, Papers of LBJ, National Security File, Country File, Box 138, Iran – CODEWORD, Vol. I.

<sup>58</sup> Heiss, *Empire and Nationhood*, 230.

<sup>59</sup> Memorandum From Robert W. Komer of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Deputy Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kaysen), 19 January 1962, Doc. 179. *FRUS Vol. XVII*.

<sup>60</sup> Shah of Iran, Visit to Washington, June 5, 1964: Background Paper – Shah's Views on East-West Relations, 2 June 1964. LBJPL, Papers of LBJ, National Security File, Country File, Box 137, Iran – Shah's Visit, 6-5-64.

<sup>61</sup> RWK to McGB, 29 January 1963. JFKPL, Papers of President Kennedy - National Security Files - Countries - Box 116A (continued from Box 116), Iran General, 1-63.

<sup>62</sup> RWK to McGB, 27 November 1963. LBJPL, Papers of LBJ, National Security File, Country File, Box 137, Iran – Shah's Visit, 6-5-64.

<sup>63</sup> Memorandum for The President from R.W. Komer, 23 January 1964. LBJPL, Papers of LBJ, National Security File, Country File, Box 137, Iran – Shah's Visit, 6-5-64.

<sup>64</sup> Letter From President Kennedy to the Shah of Iran, 1 August 1962, Doc. 11. Nina J. Noring, ed., *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961–1963, Volume XVIII, Near East, 1962–1963* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1995). [Hereafter referred to as *FRUS Vol. XVIII*].

<sup>65</sup> Robert Komer to McGeorge Bundy, 15 January 1963. Iran General 7/18/62-7/23/62. JFKL, NSF, Countries – Iran, Box 116a.

<sup>66</sup> Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Iran, 29 January 1963, Doc. 148. *FRUS Vol. XVIII*.

<sup>67</sup> Memorandum for The President from R.W. Komer, 1 November 1963. JFKPL, Papers of President Kennedy - National Security Files - Countries - Box 116A (continued from Box 116), Iran General, 11-1-63 to 11-21-63

<sup>68</sup> Memo for McGeorge Bundy, 1 November 1963. Iran General 11/1/63-11/21/63. JFKL, NSF, Countries – Iran, Box 116A.

<sup>69</sup> JFK Letter to the Shah of Iran, 7 November 1963. Iran General 11/1/63-11/21/63. JFKL, NSF, Countries – Iran, Box 116A.

---

<sup>70</sup> Memorandum for the President from R.W. Komer, 14 March 1964. LBJPL, Papers of LBJ, National Security File, Files of Robert W. Komer, Box 27, Iran – November 1963-December 1964 (1 of 2).

<sup>71</sup> Draft letter from President Johnson to the Shah, attached to Memorandum for The President from R.W. Komer, 14 March 1964. LBJPL, Papers of LBJ, National Security File, Files of Robert W. Komer, Box 27, Iran – November 1963-December 1964 (1 of 2).

<sup>72</sup> Memorandum of Conversation, 12 April 1962, Doc. 243. *FRUS Vol. XVII*.

<sup>73</sup> HHS to RWK, 14 April 1965. LBJPL, Papers of LBJ, National Security File, Files of Robert W. Komer, Box 28, Iran – 1965-March 1966 (1 of 3).

<sup>74</sup> McGlinchey, *US Arms Policies Towards the Shah's Iran*, 42-48.

<sup>75</sup> Memorandum for the President from R.W. Komer, 7 September 1965. LBJPL, Papers of LBJ, National Security File, Files of Robert W. Komer, Box 28, Iran – 1965-March 1966 (1 of 3).

<sup>76</sup> Memorandum From Robert W. Komer of the National Security Council Staff to President Johnson, 16 September 1965, Doc. 101. *FRUS Vol. XXII*.

<sup>77</sup> Telegram From the Embassy in Iran to the Department of State, 10 September 1965, Doc. 98. *FRUS Vol. XXII*.

<sup>78</sup> Telegram from Armin Meyer to Department of State, 19 October 1965. LBJPL, Papers of LBJ, National Security File, Files of Robert W. Komer, Box 28, Iran – 1965-March 1966 (2 of 3).

<sup>79</sup> Telegram from Armin Meyer to Department of State, 25 November 1965. LBJPL, Papers of LBJ, National Security File, Files of Robert W. Komer, Box 28, Iran – 1965-March 1966 (2 of 3).

<sup>80</sup> Telegram From the Embassy in Iran to the Department of State, 18 November 1965, Doc. 106. *FRUS Vol. XXII*.

<sup>81</sup> Telegram From the Embassy in Iran to the Department of State, 14 March 1966, Doc. 123. *FRUS Vol. XXII*.

<sup>82</sup> Telegram From the Embassy in Iran to the Department of State, 2 March 1966, Doc. 121. *FRUS Vol. XXII*.

<sup>83</sup> Memorandum From W. Howard Wiggins of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Special Assistant (Rostow), 21 May 1966, Doc. 140. *FRUS Vol. XXII*.

<sup>84</sup> Memorandum From Vice President Humphrey to President Johnson, 13 July 1966, Doc. 155. *FRUS Vol. XXII*.

<sup>85</sup> Memorandum From the President's Special Assistant (Rostow) to President Johnson, 19 July 1966, Doc. 157. *FRUS Vol. XXII*.

<sup>86</sup> Telegram From the Embassy in Iran to the Department of State, 11 July 1966, Doc. 153. *FRUS Vol. XXII*.

---

<sup>87</sup> Heiss, *Empire and Nationhood*, 231.

<sup>88</sup> Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood*, 156-179; Heiss, *Empire and Nationhood*, 233.

<sup>89</sup> Memorandum for Mr Rostow from Howard Wriggins, 12 July 1966. LBJPL, Papers of LBJ, National Security File, Files of Harold H. Saunders, Box 15, Iran Military – 4-1-66-12-31-67 (1 of 2).

<sup>90</sup> Letter From Vice Presidential Aide George Carroll to Vice President Humphrey, 27 July 1966, Doc. 163. *FRUS Vol. XXII*.

<sup>91</sup> Telegram From the Embassy in Iran to the Department of State, 2 March 1966, Doc. 121. *FRUS Vol. XXII*.